

Stand For Something or Fall For Anything

October 7, 2007

For 18 years as a school bus driver in the Cincinnati, Ohio area each work morning started out with an inspection of the bus. As required by law, it was to be a methodical examination of the bus to make sure that it was safe for operation in the transportation of students going to and from school. To drivers this procedure was referred to as 'pre-tripping the bus' and was quite tiring after awhile, especially during inclement weather. The inspection was more than just a cursory look and if done correctly would take about 15 minutes. It included a 12 point inspection in the engine compartment, a 30 point inspection inside the bus, a 28 point inspection outside the bus, and a 5 point operational inspection. These 75 specific points were to be meticulously checked everyday before the bus was to be taken out on the road.

As is often the case with anything that is sorely disliked or dreaded, it was not uncommon for drivers to circumvent their responsibilities. It became easy, especially during unpleasant weather, running late for work, or not feeling well, to compromise the inspection. However, as with any compromise one concession would lead to another, and then another, until eventually some drivers would go straight to their busses and avoid doing the 'pre-trip' altogether. Others might not be so blatant, but their duties were so routine there was little concentration on what they were doing and they often overlooked deficiencies on the bus. In some cases this led to mechanical problems or brake downs on the road. Regardless of the point of inspection that was neglected, such carelessness jeopardized not only the safety of all passengers in the bus but the safety of scores of other people as well - drivers, pedestrians, etc. However, just because one completed the thorough scrutiny of the bus there was no guarantee that one would never encounter troubles or difficulties.

By an easy transition, one can see the importance of self-inspection and the criticality of remaining faithful to the Lord in all points, and doing so without a compromising spirit. James wrote, "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Does James mean that if an individual breaks the law in one point he is guilty of breaking every law? No, absolutely not. Instead, he means that if a person keeps the entire law but fails to do so in just one point he is considered a law breaker and will receive the punishment as a transgressor of the law.

If a person steals, though he is not guilty of any other crime, he is still guilty of breaking the law. It is not uncommon for a person today to pick

and choose the laws he wants to obey under the perception that some laws are more important than others. For example, while one would not rob a bank he very well might rob the government by lying and cheating about his income taxes. This person is still guilty of breaking the law. James is telling the readers that one may take great strides to obey Christ in everything but then in one point carelessly trips and commits a sin; when he does so he is guilty as a lawbreaker, “for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4).

A person is not free to pick and choose the laws of God according to his tastes and preferences as though he’s walking through a spiritual smorgasbord with a wide variety of options upon which to feast while he discards the rest. He cannot emphasize the commands which he feels is of paramount importance while minimizing the obedience to other commands with a compromising spirit. A case in point would be the person who emphasizes the importance of being faithful to the Lord but then because his job demands it, or because he’s on vacation, or visiting family, etc., he compromises his allegiance by forsaking the assembling of the saints (Hebrew 10:25) on the first day of the week when this is the example found in the New Testament for when the Lord’s supper is to be observed (Acts 20:7).

As is often the case, when a person compromises God’s will he continues to drift further into apostasy. In an attempt to justify himself and the sinful behavior in which he’s engaged, the Bible is relegated to a book of minor relevance and God is demoted to nothing more than a grandfather image who will turn his head from certain infractions without imposing a penalty for the transgressions committed. Don’t be deceived in thinking that you can bargain with God on what to obey and not obey; and don’t be duped by the devil to believe that there is such a thing as partial obedience. Saul thought there was and God removed him from being King (see 1 Samuel 13 & 15).

If a Christian will not stand for the truth and against error, for right and against wrong, for godliness and against ungodliness, for morality and against immorality, for righteousness and against unrighteousness, for purity and against impurity, for knowledge and against ignorance, for God and against Satan, for the Bible and against every article opposing it, then he is clothed with the fence-riding spirit of compromise.

The difference between a thermometer and a thermostat is that the former measures the temperature and the latter regulates it. If a Christian follows the crowd, when the crowd is wrong, then the Christian is wrong as well. When a Christian is tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine and vacillates like a rooster weather vane atop the country barn, then he’s

obviously just pointing in the direction of least resistance.

Compromise in matters of opinion and liberty are fine, even encouraged (Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8); but in matters of doctrine and morality, salvation and worship, etc., there is no place for it in the life of any child of God; to do so will invoke the wrath of God. The judgment of God is without partiality; and so must our obedience to His Holy Word (Acts 10:33).

While a school bus has the highest safety rating of any vehicle, it still requires a detailed pre-trip inspection by the driver before making any journey. Incomparable in degree of importance is the Christian who continually must examine and prove himself by the standard of God's Word to see if he is in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5), that he is faithful (Revelation 2:10), that he is speaking out as he ought to speak (Ephesians 6:20), and that he is living as he ought to live (2 Peter 3:11).

Let every Christian resolve to never give up, neglect, or compromise God's Word. If he doesn't stand for something, he will fall for anything!

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